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SOME SELECTIONS FROM THE "PETERS PAPERS,"
IN THE LIBRARY OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF PENNSYLVANIA.

BY MISS J. C. WYLIE, CUSTODIAN.

Richard Peters to Conrad Weiser.

MY GOOD FRIEND

The Governor is under some Concern least, as at your request the Indians were at the Count Zinzendorfs house, he may not have abridgd them of their Quantity of meat and Drink which they usually expect on these occasions— But if they have taken anything of this kind amiss it must be laid at your Door or indeed at their own since they were told it beforehand, The Governor asked them one day to dinner & made them their Present & they seemed well pleased wth their entertainment, I have given Caxayan such a Kettle as you requested & you will let him know that it is your Present tho I have placed it to the Proprietaries account,

We have the Pleasure to hear of Mr Thomas Penns arrival in England,

Fresh Forces are gone to Jamaica from England & it is thought with Intent to take Carthagena,

I am sorry for the Indisposition of your Family & heartily wish their Recovery and the continuance of your health, as well from a principle of affection for yourself, as on account of the Publick Good w^{ch} would suffer was any accident to happen to you. I am sincerely

Your respectful Friend

RICHARD PETERS

February 28th 1741

Richard Peters to Conrad Weiser.

MY GOOD FRIEND

As the Count chooses that the Indians shall be conveyed from here to your house by the Moravian Brethren, the Governor woud have supplied them with Provisions for their journey, but the Count desird they might be maintained at his Expençe in order to recommend himself to their favour,

I should be glad to know whether they are pleased with their Present and Treatment and I have it further in charge from the Governor to desire you will furnish Caxayan with such Provisions and necessaries as will bring him on his Journey from your house to his own Country, and I will thankfully repay you the Charges the next time I see you in Town,

Do not let them want for anything that you shall judge convenient, I am

Sir

Your respectful Friend

RICHARD PETERS

PHILADELPHIA

2 March 1741

*Gov. George Thomas to Conrad Weiser.*PHILADA, febr^y. 26th 1741/2

HONEST CONRAD

Mr Peters put your Letter into my Hands which was deliver'd to him by Coxhayion with a String of wampon from the Onontagos, as an assurance that they with their Allies the five Nations, will be at Philadelphia in the Spring, according to the Proprietors Invitation, to receive the Goods for the Lands sold to him on the west side of Susquehanna, The String of wampon was deliver'd to me, & I have laid it up without returning another, as you say, it is neither necessary nor expected,

I know of nothing necessary to be said to the Indian Messenger, but that Mr Penn being gone to England for a

short time has left the Goods in my hands to be deliver'd to the Five Nations, when they come to Philad^a, That I expect to see them in the Spring according to their Promise, & that they shall meet with the same kind Reception & Entertainment from me, as if Mr. Penn himself were here; for this was his Desire & it is perfectly agreeable to my own Inclinations, that it should be so, as I esteem the Six Nations as our very good & faithful Brethren & Allies,

You will put this into such a Dress, as will be most agreeable to the People it is to be carried to, which you understand better than I do, & you may likewise make such additions as you think proper on the occasion,

The matchcoats, Powder & Lead are given as you desire, & such a Kettle as you promised to the Bearer in 1737 for his assistance to you, & is charged to the Proprietors account, as, I suppose, it was at his desire, that you made that Journey,

I leave it you to provide Meal or anything else you shall think convenient & customary for these Indians, when they come in the Spring, for their Entertainment at your House, or on the way, & shall order yur payment for it, I hope nothing will happen to prevent your coming with them; for I shall not know what to do without you, both on account of the Language & your knowledge of their Customs,

I am sorry to hear your Family is ill & very heartily wish them better Health, being

Y^r very sincere Friend
& humble serv^t

GEO. THOMAS.

P.S:

Although I have a very high opinion of Count Zinzendorf's Integrity & Religious Zeal, & consequently esteem him much, I was not altogether willing, that the messenger & his family should be at his House, lest his manner of treating them should not prove agreeable & they should think that we failed in Civility to save Expence, & so make

a Report to our Prejudice, when they return to their Countrymen, I should be very well pleased, that the Count could make them good Christians, but I would not have the Business of the Province depend upon his success with them, nor run the risque of their being disobliged by being put into the hands of a Gentleman, who out of good will would restrain them from what they think there is no Crime in making a moderate use of. Drunkenness is a very bad thing & I discourage it in Indians & others as much as I can; but should they become Christians, if they are no better than Christians in common, they will be as drunk as some of them are apt to be at present, & be greater Thieves, Adulterers, Cheats &c than the worst of Indians are, The knowledge of God & Christ ought to make Men better, but how it happens I cannot tell, yet so it is, that the common sort of People amongst Christians are worse than the Indians, who are left to the Law of Nature, that is to their own natural Reason, to guide them—If these People are anyways dissatisfied, you must excuse me, & put it upon their own Consent or Choice, as you tell me it was,

Yrs

G. T.

Robert Tuite to William Peters.

SIR

At last I got an oppertunity of sending y^e your bathing Tubb, there has been so much Ice for these two months past in the river that could not get it on board the Shallop till now, As it has been so long out of use it will want the Assistance of a Cooper before it will be fitt for yours. I hope the fishing season coming on shall soon have the pleasure of seeing you here I dare say it will be a fine Spring for Sport of all sorts & I assure you without compliment will be very much heightend to me by the pleasure of y^r good company, Your Countryman Bob is very well

as thank God we all are M^{rs} Tuite & I heartily salute you
& your Bro, I am with true Esteem

S^r

Your Humb^l : Serv^t :

ROBT. TUITE

the 27th of febr^y : 1741/2

Richard Peters to Conrad Weiser.

PHILADELPHIA 3 8ber 1750

SIR

Your news, tho extremely disagreeable, does not surprize me, because Professor Calm, a Swedish Naturalist, sent here by y^e King of Sweden & who has lately been at Niagara, told me as much, nay more indeed, for he says positively that the first attempt y^t the English shall make of erecting a Fort on any of the Waters of the Mississippi will begin a War between the French Indians & our Indians & y^t as the Indians particularly the Senecas & those on Lake Erie are French we shall undoubtedly have the worst of it,

The orders of the French Officers are, y^t any Englishman on what Business soever appearing on Lake Erie must be cut off & the Indians, as it is said, have undertaken to bring their scalps,

In short, our Indian affairs are in a most lamentable condition and therefore I am commanded by the Governor to desire most earnestly of you that you send your Journal to him with all possible Expedition & yt you be sure to give your Attendance at Philadelphia the 13th of this Instant, when the Council will sit on Indian affairs, in order to furnish Information and advice for the Assembly, & likewise for a Remonstrance to be made to the other Governments on the Continent & afterwards to his Majesty—And there is this necessity for your appearance & Testimony and advice that the Fall shippis will all be gone in the month of October, & there will be no opportunity of sending Letters to England,

Pray favour me with a Letter and tell me how I shall

write to the Proprietaries by a Ship yt is going from here in Ten Days.

It seems to me that our only Game to play now is with the Ohio Indians & the Twightwees & Owendocts who are numerous & may by proper & generous Treatment secure to us a Ballance of Indians,

I most heartily congratulate you on your safe Return & pray Heaven (if the bad lives of y^e generality of y^e people will let him protect us) y^t some method may be found to guard us against an Indian War,

The People over the Hills are combin'd against the Government, are putting in new Cropps & bid us Defiance,

Good & generous Spirits do not sink in times of publick Calamity, but exercise a cool understanding, &, where it is proper, undergo whatever hardships they are expos'd to,

I have already given the Proprietors an uncomfortable Detail of Indian Affairs y^e last week by Mr. Hockley, who has left with me a Power of Attorney to sell or otherwise dispose of his Lands about Reading,

Your Patent for Mahoniaky will be made out on Demand; But I dont mention this on any other Account than to shew you that previous to all this Change of affairs I have done with the Proprietaries what I promis'd you, that is, a Grant in Fee to you & your Heirs for those Lands

I am at all times whether difficult or otherwise

D^r. S^r Your affectionate

Friend

RICHARD PETERS

Samuel Auchmuty to Richard Peters.

NEW YORK July 29th 1754

DEAR SIR

I hope ere this you have got over the fatigue of your late Excursion & that your Health has no ways suffered by it; but on the contrary the Exercise you have had, has supplied you with a new fund of Spirits and Activity, whereby you may proceed, (but with more Alacrity) as you have

hitherto done, in serving mankind, & promoting the Honour & Reputation of your Governm^t,

I was much concerned that I was prevented seeing you the Day you left New York, I was twice at your Lodgings for that purpose, Besides being desirous in person of wishing you a good & pleasant Journey, Health & Happiness, I had the Lottery acct to settle with you, & the Ballance in my pocket to pay you; but as I had not that satisfaction, I now begg you will let me know how I am to dispose of your money, whether I shall pay it to any one here, or send it to you; & also thro' this Channel receive my [torn out] ardent prayers for your prosperity & Happiness,

We have no news, unless it should be news to acquaint you that Whitfield is here, ranting away every Evening in the Meeting House, Yesterday He held forth there three times, His audience hitherto has consisted chiefly of the Dregs of the City. He has neither visited our Church or Clergy, since he has been here—I hear that tomorrow he sets off for your City,

I will not by adding anything further engross your time, therefore conclude with assuring you that

I am D^r S^r with the utmost sincerity

Y^r much obliged Friend & Bro^r

SAMUEL AUCHMUTY

P, S,—My Compliments to
Parson Smith, Sturgeon
& all Friends,

Please in order to save postage, when you write to me to direct y^r Letter as follows

To R. NICHOLLS Esq^r
in
N. Y

Rev. William Smith to Richard Peters.

PHILAD^A 22^d Feb^r 1755

D^R S^R

Mr. Allen and you having signified to Mr. Alison and me that the Trustees propose us the Honor of filling up the

Blanks in the Charter with our names, & desired us to confer together on the Subject, we have complied with that desire, & settled as follows,

Mr. Alison readily agrees that to add the Duties of Provost to those of Latin master, would be more than one Man could manage; more especially as the Superintendence of the Philosophy-Classes, which must naturally fall to the Provost, would be inconsistent with the Business of a professor of Languages,

As to my sentiments they are in brief as follows, I need not tell you that I think Mr. Alison qualified for any Station in any College; and 'tis to be hoped, as soon as the Circumstances of the Academy will permit, the Trustees will give him some easier Professorship than the laborious one of Languages; and till that is the Case he wishes too well to the Institution to desire it, In the mean Time as this Charter is granted chiefly to enable us, on a collegiate Plan, to govern & confer Honors upon Students in Philosophy, that good Intention would be wholly defeated, & the Professors in the Sciences rendered despicable in the Eyes of the Students, should the chief Dignity arising from the new Charter & new Institution, center in any inferior School. What Professor of Genius or Spirit would be found willing to qualify Students in Philosophy for Degrees, if any other Master in an inferior School had the conferring such Degrees, and deprived him of the Honor due to his Labors? Or who would undertake the Care of Philosophy Classes on such a Footing?

Thus we were determined in this whole affair of the Charter, solely by the Reason of Things, & the future Success of the Institution; without any private Biass,

We have however thought fit to add one thing to the Charter, viz; that in Mr. Alison's Case, Rector of the Academy shall be added to the Name of Viceprovost as synonymous.—The Reason is this, By your printed Constitutions, when your plan extended no higher than a Latin School, the Master of that School was Rector of the inferior

ones, The world, reading this, without knowing any private Reasons between Mr. Alison & you, believed him Rector ex officio, & he was frequently addressed as such, Unless, therefore, Rector is added to the name Viceprovost, he is afraid the world might think he has rather lost than gained by the Enlargment of the Plan; As this is a delicate Matter, and as we have conducted the whole affair of the Charter with the utmost Harmony, Calmness & Deliberation, I must beg leave to insist on that small alteration, without enquiring further into the Reasons of it; for till my worthy Friend & Colleague is fully satisfied I cannot be satisfied. But this Expedient, which himself proposed, makes all perfectly easy; and I hope the Trustees, far from refusing to indulge us in this, will rather approve of the Temper & Harmony with which we have consulted the Good of the Institution, in an affair which, with some Masters, might have embarrassed them a little, The words can do no hurt in the Charter, because they stand in a clause that has no Connection with the Rest; & the name dies with Mr. Alison, unless the Trustees renew it, And in deed when the Philosophy Students grow numerous, it may be necessary to remove them to a separate house, & then a Rector of the Academy may again be necessary, tho' still in Subordination to the general Government of the Faculty, But it would be needless to put this in the Charter, since the Trustees have power to give such a subordinate Inspection of any number of the Schools to any professor whatever.—Mr. Alison and I communicated this scheme jointly to Mr. Allen, and severally to Mr. Francis & Mr. Franklin, I write this to you to enable you to explain the matter to the Trustees, as Mr. Alison thought it better for me to explain it than him,

I am Sr.

Your obed^t, humble Serv^t,

WILL: SMITH,

Richard Peters to Thomas Penn.

HONOURD SIR

Mr. Cookson dying unexpectedly I was obliged to go to Lancaster, It was well he left me Executor, as I had then all his Papers in my Power, which I have sorted, putting the Surveying Business by itself, the Proprietary Business, the Prothonotarys and the Governors by themselves & bringing all with me except what related to his County Offices & that of Deputy Register, His Papers were not in the best order on account of his having removed into a new House & postponed thro Indisposition the putting them in order, Mr. Edward Shippen Senior succeeds him in all his offices except that of Deputy Surveyor, which is given by Mr. Scull with the Governors Approbation & on my Recommendation to a Son of Mr. James Galbreath of Paxtong, who has been a steady Friend to the Government & the Proprietary Interest ever since your Departure, I believe both Offices will be discharged faithfully and to general satisfaction,

I acknowledge the Receipt of your Duplicate of the 9th January last, and an additional Letter of the 2^d February, The original of that of the 9th January I reced by the Lyon the 23^d March, I have at last the pleasure to see Mr Joyce who delivered me yours of the 14 July, He has been all this while at Boston consuming his time in selling no more Goods than would bear his Expences & complaining mightily of the People,

What I do not answer now, I will not fail to do fully by the next ship, having a cold upon me that will not let me hold down my head,

I am pleased to hear that Lady Juliana is as well as could be expected and likely to give you an agreeable Increase of your Family, Mr Tench Francis declares very deliberately that your son is the finest Boy in the world, nor wonder at it, adds he with great seriousness, for I never saw the Peer of his mother for Grace and amiableness and

a fine Person, She does me Honour to take notice of my mentioning the Joy I expressed on the happy State of your Family at the Birth of your Son, Such news every year would give fresh delight if she should retain her health & you your Spirits,

You rightly term my Letter of the 12 June a despairing Letter, tho I was not then so much cast down, as a little after my Letter of the 10th August, At that time Mr Francis & I had agreed to bring four Ejectments in a County, and to draw up a particular advertisement to be put into the Papers at the usual time of the Receiver Generals giving his annual Notice in January or the beginning of February: and I was to take the short method of Fine & Imprisonment on two or three of the most notorious Trespassers on your appropriated Tracts, taking with me the Sheriff & two Magistrates, When all of a sudden for no reason in the world that I know of (but some foolish Body or another telling him that the Assembly would not give him his salary, having a Notion that he assisted the Governor who gave the House too much trouble by his advice, and that while he did so, he must never expect anything from the People) while I was preparing the Business for him He enterd into a mysterious Conversation in the close of which he told me he must altogether decline the Proprietaries Business, This allarmed me & stopt my Progress, afterwards he spoke doubtfully, & at other times would ask about Kilsmillers Business, and then again relapse into doubts & uncertainty, Matters being in this ballancing way, sometimes in good humour & sometimes otherwise, I waited to see what issue it would take and especially as I found the Governor in the same Embarassment as myself, not knowing when he had & when he had him not,

At last your Instruction arrivd & w^a the time of the Assemblys sitting drew nigh, it was communicated to Mr Allen & Mr Francis. After one or two conferences on this subject he told the Governor, in the manner I wrote, that he could no longer serve as Attorney General or be retaind

for the Proprietaries & yet when he knew that the Governor would follow Mr Allens & his advice, he returned to his former state & thought much & well about the Business,

I gave him fifty Pounds as he had wrote all the Governors Letters to the President of Maryland, & went up to York to the Tryal of Kilsmiller, & he said it was enough— It was not, added he, money he wanted or desired, but he was growing into years & did business slower than in his youth, perhaps owing to greater Caution and a Retreat into something that would maintain him was a Prudence due to his Family, Well, says I, shall I talk to you about Proprietary Business, I have a long time wanted to say something to you on their Concerns whereupon he very gravely said you have not stopd your hand for any thing I have said, discoursed upon my saying no Ejectments had been brought nor distresses made, nor could I tell what to do, What says he would you advise me to — Since you ask me I think you should proceed to do business as usual, and take Fees for all extraordinary Business, & Let the £50 p. annum suffice for a Retainer & ordinary Business, And he has this under consideration, nor have I a positive answer yet, He then asked what he should do about the Attorney Generals place, I told him I made no doubt but the Governor would satisfy him as to the Point of the Sallary, I could not give you an Idea of my Situation but by a particular Detail which will serve to show you, as it is every word matter of Fact, that whatever my Inclinations are, it has not been in my power to do anything that I promised in my Letter to do, For what signified it to go on the appropriated Tracts without doing something, especially as I did not know what was your final determination as to Leases, and whenever I go over them it will be necessary to distinguish some, as well as punish others, & in short by prudent measures to gain some of the best of the people on your side, The Tenants on Callowhill & Springton manors have expressed their Inclinations to lease tho they

would chuse to purchase, & thro the indefatigable pains of Mr Richardson pay their Rents pretty regularly,

I have had much Conversation with Mr, Allen & Mr Francis, & they do sincerely & after the best deliberation declare, that the Paper money Bill had better pass here with the usual appropriation by the Assembly, & be condemn'd at home by previous management for that very unreasonable & unparliamentary method of appropriation: which they say may be done by a word speaking and that it is an honest & just & right & fair method, for you will never otherwise get it brought to a fair Issue, the People will be so tumultuous & ungovernable, and they earnestly entreat I will place this matter in y^e strongest Light to you that I can, & recommend it with all the zeal possible, and they have really persuaded me into an Opinion of its being the proper method so far as that since it must at last after a long contention be refer'd to his Majesty, it woud save abundance of vexatious wrangles if the matter shoud at first be brought to that Tribunal and the Disposal of the money there settled in the whole Legislature,

Your reason for your stay this year in England is so unexceptionable, that if you can set out the next year, I shoud think the Governor, if askd, notwithstanding his notice, will stay till your arrival in the Government, tho the year after notice woud expire perhaps in March next, or April, according to the time of its being served on you, for the Governor thinks that he is obliged to give a full years notice which is to commence from the Day of Service.

Mr. Francis offerd no alteration in the Method of doing Business so that you must have misunderstood my letter, Nor was any Mode talkd on except what I have before mentioned.

As to the Prospect of Philadelphia, I understood your Letter right, y^t it was to be for your private use, but Heap, tho I did not know it, had determin'd to do it by subscription & woud not be brought to any other terms, than those mention'd in Mr Hockleys & my first Letter & in every step we

had the Governors advice, & and it is founded on this Truth, that no Copper Plate can be kept long a private Property, for some or other of your Friends woud be shewing the Map & the moment the Map makers get hold of a Map and they are always prowling like Foxes they woud get it engraved and disperse it abroad, We acted for the best and it gives us pain that our proceedings are so desagreable, Coud I be justified by your short direction to put you to the Expençe of £200?

You may, Honourd Sir, receive your Fifty Pounds back on demand I having secured it, or you may have the conduct of the Engraving at Mr. Sculls expence & take your Fifty copys first & send the rest here, which last I think the best, and what will help Mr. Scull out of the Scrape I have led him into.

I advisd Mr Scull to try all methods to get it from the widow of George Heap, a subtle crafty woman & he succeeded beyond my Expectation at the Expençe of a Present to her of £100 for her part. George had received £100 more & Winter since his death has reced £15,

Be so good as to peruse the Instructions given to Mr. Wallace by Mr Scull and if you should not chuse to be a Subscriber, yet be pleased, as the Poor man has done all to serve you, and with a wonderful chearfulness, to recommend the Execution of the work to an honest & frugal man, or it may prove an heavier Burthen than Mr. Scull can go thro,

In the Box are two Printed Books of the Newcastle Laws neatly bound here, An Exemplified Law being the one which you say was omitted, tho by a memorandum of Charles Brockdens it was sent at the time the Papers of the Maryland Com^{rs} went. If it shoud not have been sent as it was a single Act passed at that August Sessions 1750 it must have been owing to my Engagements in your Commission,

I have likewise put up Copies of Mr Allens Leases & Mr Isaac Norriss.

From the Instructions already given very good Lease may be drawn but your precise orders and the Covenants to be expressd in the Leases and the Fines on the dropping of one two or the whole three Lives would be the most satisfactory.

I am

PHILADELPHIA

18 Apr 1753

Honourd Sir

Your most obedient

humble servant

RICHARD PETERS

The Honourable THOMAS PENN Esquire,

P. S.—If notwithstanding what has been said about the Perspective, you shall be of opinion that you can preserve the Privacy of the Copper Plate, which may be done by Patent, you may take the Draught to yourself, sending three hundred Copies to Mr Scull for the use of the subscribers so many having paid Ten Shillings a Piece, and enable Mr Scull to be repaid what is given to Mrs Heap, If a man be sent over on purpose, there will be no End of the Expence,

I can be informed by Mr Joyce of every Point I want to know respecting Leases in England, as he me. No care however shall be wanting on my side previous to my executing your orders, nor in the Forms of the Leases, But people assign over their Property so often here that I am afraid of unavoidable confusion, If they assign over their Leases as frequently as they do their other Titles will it not occasion trouble, this may be done without the Privity & Consent of the Prop^{rs} & their Agents, and then as nine in ten dye Intestate and the Orphans Courts give orders for the Division & Sale of the Estates, what will be done with a Leasehold Estate? I dont write this as an Answer to the several Parts of your Letters relating to this subject for I shall after my conferences wth Mr Joyce put ell I have to say in one letter & mix nothing with it.

NEW YORK May 12, 1748

Advertisement.

Ran away the Twenty Seventh of April last from William Cumming of the City of Annapolis in Maryland a Servant Man named John Herbertson he is a Convict a North Country Man speaks broad Scotch, and has a rough Hoarse Voice he is a Middle siz'd Man, of a fresh Complexion Sandy colour'd Hair and Beard with very white Eye Brows and is a Miller by Trade he was seen Two Days ago in this City of New York, and has on a Brown Suit of Cloth Cloaths a ruffled Shirt, a pair of Check Trousers and a Leather Jocky Cap, he Chews Tobacco very much and walks heavily, it is supposed he has a false Pass. Whoever takes up and secures the said Servant so that his Master may have him again, shall have Five Pounds Reward, besides what the Law allows, and all reasonable Charges, paid by—

WILLIAM CUMMING.